



General Assembly

January Session, 2017

## ***Amendment***

LCO No. 6859



Offered by:  
SEN. SUZIO, 13<sup>th</sup> Dist.

To: Subst. Senate Bill No. 894

File No. 161

Cal. No. 108

### ***"AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE STATE OVERSIGHT COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES."***

1 Strike section 1 in its entirety and substitute the following in lieu  
2 thereof:

3 "Section 1. Section 17a-4 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
4 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2017*):

5 (a) There shall be a State [Advisory] Oversight Council on Children  
6 and Families which shall consist of [nineteen members as follows: (1)  
7 Thirteen members appointed by the Governor, including two persons  
8 who are child care professionals, two persons eighteen to twenty-five  
9 years of age, inclusive, served by the Department of Children and  
10 Families, one child psychiatrist licensed to practice medicine in this  
11 state and one attorney who has expertise in legal issues related to  
12 children and youth and seven persons who shall be representative of  
13 young persons, parents and others interested in the delivery of services  
14 to children and youths, including child protection, behavioral health,  
15 juvenile justice and prevention services, at least four of whom shall be

16 parents, foster parents or family members of children who have  
17 received, or are receiving, behavioral health services, child welfare  
18 services or juvenile services; and (2) six members representing the  
19 regional advisory councils established pursuant to section 17a-30,  
20 appointed one each by the members of each council. On and after  
21 October 1, 2014, no more than half the members of the council shall be  
22 persons who receive income from a private practice or any public or  
23 private agency that delivers mental health, substance abuse, child  
24 abuse prevention and treatment, child welfare services or juvenile  
25 services. Members of the council shall serve without compensation,  
26 except for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their  
27 duties. The Department of Children and Families shall provide the  
28 council with funding to facilitate the participation of those members  
29 representing families and youth, as well as for other administrative  
30 support services. Members shall serve on the council for terms of two  
31 years each and no member shall serve for more than three consecutive  
32 terms. The commissioner shall be an ex-officio member of the council  
33 without vote and shall attend its meetings] the following members: (1)  
34 Two members appointed by the speaker of the House of  
35 Representatives, one of whom shall have expertise in providing  
36 services through the family assessment response program operated by  
37 the Department of Children and Families and one of whom shall be an  
38 advocate for children and youths; (2) two members appointed by the  
39 president pro tempore of the Senate, one of whom shall have expertise  
40 in providing behavioral health services to children and youths served  
41 by the Department of Children and Families and one of whom shall be  
42 an attorney with expertise in legal issues related to children and  
43 youths; (3) two members appointed by the majority leader of the  
44 House of Representatives, one of whom shall be between the ages of  
45 eighteen and twenty-five and a former recipient of in-home services or  
46 supervision provided by the Department of Children and Families and  
47 one of whom shall be a behavioral health advocate who serves on the  
48 Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council established pursuant  
49 to section 17a-22j; (4) two members appointed by the majority leader of  
50 the Senate, one of whom shall be a child psychiatrist licensed to

51 practice medicine in this state and one of whom shall be a behavioral  
52 health advocate who serves on the Behavioral Health Partnership  
53 Oversight Council established pursuant to section 17a-22j; (5) two  
54 members appointed by the minority leader of the House of  
55 Representatives, one of whom shall be between the ages of eighteen  
56 and twenty-five and a former foster child and one of whom shall be a  
57 provider of therapeutic foster care; (6) two members appointed by the  
58 minority leader of the Senate, one of whom shall be an attorney with  
59 expertise in legal issues related to children and youths and one of  
60 whom shall be a practicing member of the Connecticut Chapter of the  
61 American Academy of Pediatrics; (7) one member appointed by the  
62 chairpersons of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee  
63 established pursuant to section 46b-121n, who shall be a member of  
64 such committee and an advocate for or provider of services to children  
65 and youths; (8) the chairpersons and ranking members of the joint  
66 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
67 matters relating to appropriations, children, human services and the  
68 judiciary; (9) the Child Advocate, or the Child Advocate's designee;  
69 (10) the Chief Public Defender, or the Chief Public Defender's  
70 designee; and (11) six members appointed one each by the members of  
71 the regional advisory councils established pursuant to section 17a-30,  
72 who shall be parents, foster parents or family members of children or  
73 youths who have received or currently receive behavioral health  
74 services, child welfare services or juvenile services. The Commissioner  
75 of Children and Families shall be an ex-officio member of the council  
76 without vote. Any member who fails to attend three consecutive  
77 meetings or fifty per cent of all meetings during any calendar year  
78 shall be deemed to have resigned. Any vacancy shall be filled by the  
79 appointing authority. The council shall elect a chairperson and vice-  
80 chairperson, [to act in the chairperson's absence] who shall not be  
81 representatives of the executive or legislative branches, from among its  
82 members.

83 (b) The [council] State Oversight Council on Children and Families  
84 shall meet [quarterly] bimonthly, and more often upon the call of the

85 [chair] chairperson and vice-chairperson or a majority of the members.  
86 The council's meetings shall be held at locations that facilitate  
87 participation by members of the public, and its agenda and minutes  
88 shall be posted on the [department's] Department of Children and  
89 Families' Internet web site and the Internet web site of the General  
90 Assembly. A majority of the members [in office] present, but not less  
91 than [six] twelve members, shall constitute a quorum. The council shall  
92 have complete access to all records of the institutions and facilities of  
93 the department in furtherance of its duties, while at all times  
94 protecting the right of privacy of all individuals involved, as provided  
95 in section 17a-28.

96 (c) The duties of the [council] State Oversight Council on Children  
97 and Families shall be to: (1) [Recommend to the commissioner  
98 programs, legislation or other matters which will improve services for  
99 children and youths, including behavioral health services; (2)] Monitor,  
100 track and evaluate the policies and practices of the Department of  
101 Children and Families with respect to safety, permanency and well-  
102 being outcomes for children and youths, including, but not limited to,  
103 policies and practices related to ensuring that (A) children and youths  
104 are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect; (B) children  
105 and youths are safely placed in their homes whenever possible and  
106 appropriate; (C) children and youths have permanency and stability in  
107 their living situations; (D) the continuity of children and youth's family  
108 relationships and connections is preserved; (E) families have enhanced  
109 capacity to provide for the needs of children and youths; (F) children  
110 and youths receive appropriate services to meet their educational  
111 needs; and (G) children and youths receive adequate services to meet  
112 their physical and mental health needs; (2) submit policy and  
113 legislative recommendations to the Commissioner of Children and  
114 Families and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly  
115 having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and children  
116 that will improve safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for  
117 children and youths, including, but not limited to, recommendations  
118 concerning behavioral health services; (3) annually review and advise

119 the commissioner and the joint standing committees of the General  
120 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and  
121 children regarding the proposed budget; [(3) interpret to the  
122 community at large the policies, duties and programs of the  
123 department; (4) issue any reports it deems necessary to the Governor  
124 and the Commissioner of Children and Families; (5) assist in the  
125 development of and review and comment on the strategic plan  
126 developed by the department pursuant to subsection (b) of section 17a-  
127 3; (6)] (4) receive on a quarterly basis from the commissioner a status  
128 report on the department's progress in [carrying out the strategic plan]  
129 promoting safety, permanency and well-being outcomes, including,  
130 but not limited to, data regarding such outcomes categorized by race,  
131 ethnicity, age cohorts, departmental region and, where practicable,  
132 disability status; (5) receive on an annual basis, beginning not later  
133 than January 1, 2018, from the joint standing committee of the General  
134 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children,  
135 information contained in the annual report card maintained pursuant  
136 to section 2-53m that is relevant to the duties of the council; [(7)] (6)  
137 independently monitor the department's progress in achieving its  
138 goals as expressed in the strategic plan developed by the department  
139 pursuant to subsection (b) of section 17a-3, as amended by this act, and  
140 any outcome measures established by the council; and [(8)] (7) offer  
141 assistance and provide an outside perspective to the department so  
142 that it may be able to achieve the goals expressed in the strategic plan  
143 and implement the recommendations of the council.

144 (d) Not later than July 1, 2018, and annually thereafter, the State  
145 Oversight Council on Children and Families shall submit a report, in  
146 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing  
147 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
148 relating to appropriations and children. Such report shall include, but  
149 need not be limited to, (1) findings and recommendations regarding  
150 the policies and practices of the Department of Children and Families;  
151 (2) information regarding the impact of such policies on safety,  
152 permanency and well-being outcomes for children and youths,

153 including those outcomes described in subdivision (1) of subsection (c)  
154 of this section; and (3) if applicable, legislative recommendations.

155 (e) Not later than thirty days after receipt of the report submitted  
156 pursuant to subsection (d) of this section, the joint standing  
157 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
158 relating to appropriations and children shall, in conjunction with the  
159 chairperson and vice-chairperson of the State Oversight Council on  
160 Children and Families, hold an informational hearing on such report.

161 (f) The State Oversight Council on Children and Families may,  
162 without remuneration from the state, be staffed by an organization or  
163 educational institution with the necessary expertise and resources to  
164 assist in the administration of the work of the council."